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The Daemon

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The Daemon

Description

Review of *The Daemon*

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The Daemon

Posted on **April 1, 2010** by **Editor**



Review by **Jeffrey Barlow**

The Daemon is a fiction book written by Daniel Suarez, an author with considerable experience in the technology field, particularly as a systems developer [1]. The work is both speculative and highly demanding in that it requires the reader to have a relatively strong grasp of technological issues in order to appreciate the plot.

Nonetheless, *The Daemon* has been quite successful as a mass-market work and inspired the immediate publication of a second book in the series, *Freedom TM*, just released. The books are generally described as “Techno Thrillers,” and the appearance and success of *The Daemon* is perhaps one measure of the impact of the Internet.

The plot device is a familiar one which has been with us for quite some time, well before the development of the Internet itself: Machines, in this case an Internet-enabled artificial intelligence capable of not only replicating itself across platforms but also learning very rapidly, threatens the protagonist, if not the world.

The author defines a daemon as “A computer program that runs continuously in the background and performs specified operations at predefined times or in response to certain events.” (facing title page) Conventionally a daemon is a background program which responds to network requests, hardware activity or calls from other programs [2]. This particular daemon, however, takes over the entire show, creating additional programming rather than responding to it. This is rather an extensive reach from the current capabilities of such operations.

But what Suarez brings to the genre is sufficient expertise with technology to take this plot device well beyond the usual bounds of belief. A wide range of technological mavens, including Stuart Brand, Billy Brand (The former Director of Cybersecurity and Communications Policy for the White House) and Robin Cook have reviewed it positively, all affirming it as presenting a possible future, given the direction of current technology [3].

While it is certainly true that the book is solidly based on current technology, I find the

extrapolation successful in the limited sense that from where we are now, just about anything might, indeed, happen. But the central plot device, without giving too much away, depends ultimately on one man writing unprecedented amounts of code with thousands if not millions of branches so that whatever situation develops, his Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) engine can continue to respond successfully.

One scenario, for example, has several hyped-up and weaponized automobiles performing flawlessly without direction. Presumably none of these were Toyotas, and none encountered unexpected circumstances, even at very high speeds. The machines defy not only logic, but the laws of physics as well. While A. I. may indeed improve in geometric progressions, it is unlikely that the laws of physics will change that much.

Nonetheless, the work is worth reading as light fiction, if only to show us how far a plot can now be carried on the basis of a deep understanding of current technology. Obviously there is an audience which is much more prepared for such demanding plot devices than could have possibly been the case a few short years ago.

Part of the appeal is that as the protagonist, Detective Peter Sebeck, tries to solve a series of mysterious crimes, he is taught enough technology by others to begin to appreciate the threat presented by a daemon seemingly programmed by a man believed to be dead. As his understanding grows, it is based on current technology, and the reader finds himself nodding along, affirming the possibilities.

The writing is straightforward and usually unobtrusive, though not by any means particularly evocative. It is technology that carries the work, not character development nor language. The protagonist and secondary characters are at the last eminently forgettable.

Fans of this genre probably owe it to themselves to read the work, if only to see where the field might possibly be going insofar as dependant upon readers' ability to follow complicated technological problems and their solutions within a thriller-fiction context. It will be interesting to see whether the second volume carries the series farther, or provides us more of the same, which could easily become rather mechanical in short order.

Endnotes

[1] See book page at: <http://thedaemon.com/aboutauthor.html>

[2] See description at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daemon_%28computer_software%29

[3] To access these reviews, start at: <http://thedaemon.com/>

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8 THOUGHTS ON "THE DAEMON"

Bydgoszczon **January 30, 2014 at 7:12 AM** said:

I do enjoy visiting your platform, you often make me suprise with exellent post.

naija social networkon **January 30, 2014 at 11:37 AM** said:

I'm incredibly enjoying the theme/design of your site. Do you ever run into any browser compatibility problems? A modest number of my blog audience have complained about my internet site not operating correctly in Explorer but seems good in Firefox. Do you've any tips to help fix this issue?|I am curious to discover what blog method you will be utilizing? I'm getting some little security issues with my latest web site and I wish to find something much more safeguarded. Do you have any recommendations?

Lanita Winsletton **January 30, 2014 at 6:17 PM** said:

I would like to thank you for the efforts you've put in writing this site. I am hoping the same high-grade web site post from you in the upcoming as well. Actually your creative writing skills has encouraged me to get my own web site now. Really the blogging is spreading its wings rapidly. Your write up is a great example of it.

plotkaon **February 1, 2014 at 1:48 AM** said:

I will instantly clutch your rss as I can not in finding your email subscription link or newsletter service.

zycie gwiazd

on **February 1, 2014 at 2:17 AM** said:

Thanks , I've just been looking for data about this subject in your long time and yours may be the finest I've came upon so far. But, what in regards to the conclusion? Are you particular around the supply?

aquaponics diy

on **February 2, 2014 at 4:17 AM** said:

Another key to keep in mind is that if you would like to generate your own electric to operate the system.

I have always loved DIY and still have always kept fish while I first found out about aquaponics a few months ago I had to create my own system.

The sky is really the limit using the type of fish you can grow (provided you can find no bans on the process).

aquaponics diy

on **February 2, 2014 at 4:19 AM** said:

The feeds for that fish you will put into the machine supports the expansion of both the fish and plants. And you'll know they come from the clean organic source.

The system will only require the addition of little or no water each week.

Nigeria social network

on **February 5, 2014 at 12:16 AM** said:

I and also my buddies came looking at the great tips located over a web site and just before extended I had a terrible feeling I in no way thanked the web website owner for those people tips. All the individuals are genuinely warmed to find out them and have now truly been making probably the most of these things. Quite a few thanks for

definitely becoming really type along with for figuring out particular quite good themes most men and women are really needing to become aware of. My honest apologies for not expressing appreciation to earlier.